

NCA
VOC FOR PGM/FN
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CHARLES WEISS/TEHERAN

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IRAN SITUATION

ANNCR:

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN IRAN IS SHAPING UP MORE AS A POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN TWO MEN THAN A CLASH OF IDEOLOGY. THE SHAH HAS THE ARMY BEHIND HIM. HIS OPPONENT THE EXILED SHIITE MOSLEM LEADER AYATULLAH KHOMEINY HAS THE PEOPLE. CHARLES WEISS REPORTS.

VOICE:

DURING THE LATEST DISTURBANCES IN TEHERAN THE MOB HAD ONE RALLYING CRY" "LONG LIVE KHOMEINY. DEATH TO THE SHAH."

ISSUES NO LONGER PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE. THE SHAH'S POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION PROGRAM HAS ANSWERED JUST ABOUT ALL THAT PROGRESSIVE ELEMENTS HAD BEEN DEMANDING. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE COMMUNISTS, HE LIFTED THE BAN ON POLITICAL PARTIES. HE PROMISED FREE ELECTIONS FOR JUNE, THOUGH NOW BECAUSE OF UNSETTLED CONDITIONS THAT DATE IS IN DOUBT. HE HAS INSTITUTED INVESTIGATIONS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY'S FINANCIAL DEALINGS, ALWAYS A SORE POINT, AND EVEN SEEMS PREPARED TO ACCEPT CURBS ON HIS OWN PREROGATIVE.

NEVERTHELESS, AYATULLAH KHOMEINY FROM HIS PARIS EXILE KEEPS PUSHING ON WITH HIS UNCOMPROMISING DEMAND THAT IT IS THE SHAH AND THE PAHLAVI DYNASTY WHICH MUST GO. ANYONE WHO COOPERATES WITH THE AUTHORITIES, HE SAYS, IS GUILTY OF TREASON AGAINST IRAN. THE CALL IS DIRECTED TO IRAN'S SHIITE MOSLEMS, BUT DOES NOT DWELL ON SPECIFIC RELIGIOUS GRIEVANCES. HIS ICONOCLASTIC APPEAL HAS BROUGHT THE MOBS OUT INTO THE STREETS AND LED UP TO THE PRESENT CRISIS.

A WEEK AGO, BEFORE THE ARMY TOOK OVER, THERE HAD BEEN WIDE SPREAD SPECULATION THAT THE NATIONAL FRONT BLOC WOULD BE INVITED

TO LEAD A COALITION GOVERNMENT UNDER THE SHAH. THE NATIONAL FRONT WAS THE PARTY OF MOHAMMED MOSSADEGH WHEN HE OUSTED THE SHAH FOR A TIME IN NINETEEN FIFTY-THREE. A UNION OF PARTIES FROM THE EXTREME LEFT TO THE EXTREME RIGHT, IT WAS BANNED ON THE SHAH'S RETURN TO POWER LATER THAT YEAR. FOR A QUARTER OF A CENTURY IT WAS UNDERGROUND AND RE-EMERGED AS A POLITICAL GROUPING ONLY THIS PAST AUGUST WHEN A BAN ON PARTIES WAS LIFTED.

BEFORE FORMULATING A PROGRAM OF ITS OWN, ITS LEADER, KARIM SANJABI, FLEW TO PARIS TO MEET WITH AYATULLAH KHOMEINY, THE MAN WHOSE AGITATION HAS BROUGHT IRAN TO THE POINT WHERE BASIC POLITICAL CHANGE WAS POSSIBLE. HE CAME BACK TO TEHERAN A CONVERT TO THE AYATULLAH'S WAY OF THINKING -- THAT THE MONARCHY HAD TO BE REPLACED BY WHAT HE VAGUELY CALLED AN INDEPENDENT ISLAMIC DEMOCRACY. ON SATURDAY EVENING HE WAS ARRESTED.

AYATULLAH KHOMEINY'S DEPUTY IN IRAN IS A RELIGIOUS LEADER IN THE HOLY CITY OF QOM, SOUTH OF TEHERAN. AYATULLAH SHARIET-MADARI HAS FREQUENTLY STATED MUCH THE SAME THING AS DOCTOR SANJABI, EVEN HINTING THAT THE DAY MAY COME WHEN THE PEOPLE WILL HAVE TO TAKE UP ARMS TO UNSEAT THE SHAH. YET THE AUTHORITIES DARE NOT TOUCH HIM. THE IMPLICATION IS THAT DOCTOR SANJABI'S NATIONAL FRONT HAS NO REAL CONSTITUENCY. AYATULLAH SHARIET-MADARI DOES, AND IT IS ONE THE SHAH CAN TANGLE WITH ONLY AT HIS PERIL.

THE NATIONAL FRONT TRIED TO GET ON THE MOSLEM BANDWAGON AND AT THE SAME TIME RETAIN ITS IDENTITY AS THE PROGRESSIVE FORCE FOUNDED BY MOSSADEGH. THE AUTHORITIES MOVED TO NIP IT IN THE BUD.

THE COMMUNISTS HAVE ALSO PLAYED A PART IN THE UNREST, AND LIKE THE NATIONAL FRONT, HAVE JOINED FORCES WITH THE MOSLEM

UPRISING. UNLIKE THE FRONT, HOWEVER, THEY HAVE PLAYED DOWN THEIR ROLE. SOME OF THE STUDENTS' SLOGANS AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND THE AMERICAN PRESENCE CARRY THE IMPRINT OF MARXIST INFLUENCE. BUT THE AUTHORS REMAIN IN THE BACKGROUND. I ASKED ONE OF THE LEFTIST LEADERS OF THE DEMONSTRATION HOW THE COMMUNISTS COULD GO ALONG WITH A MOVEMENT HEADED BY A CLERIC LIKE AYATULLAH KHOMEINY. HIS REPLY WAS, "WE ACCEPT HIM AS OUR LEADER, IN SILENCE."

GH/RCS